

A scenic photograph of the Washington Monument in Washington, D.C. The monument is a tall, white, obelisk-shaped structure that rises vertically in the center of the frame. It is partially framed by the branches of cherry blossom trees in the foreground, which are in full bloom with pink and white flowers. The sky is a clear, bright blue. In the background, there are some green trees and a body of water, likely the Tidal Basin, which is visible at the bottom of the image. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and beautiful, capturing the essence of the cherry blossom season in the nation's capital.

# **The National Association for State Community Services Programs (NASCSP) How to Manage Stress When Everything is Urgent**

[www.nascsp.org](http://www.nascsp.org)

# AGENDA

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***The Urgency Epidemic***

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***The Good, the Bad and the Ugly of an Urgent World***

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***Leading with Urgency & the Trust factor***

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***Protecting yourself and your team from Burnout***

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***Mastering Urgency***



# The Urgency Epidemic

Time is our most  
precious resource

and

It feels like everything  
is **urgent all the time**



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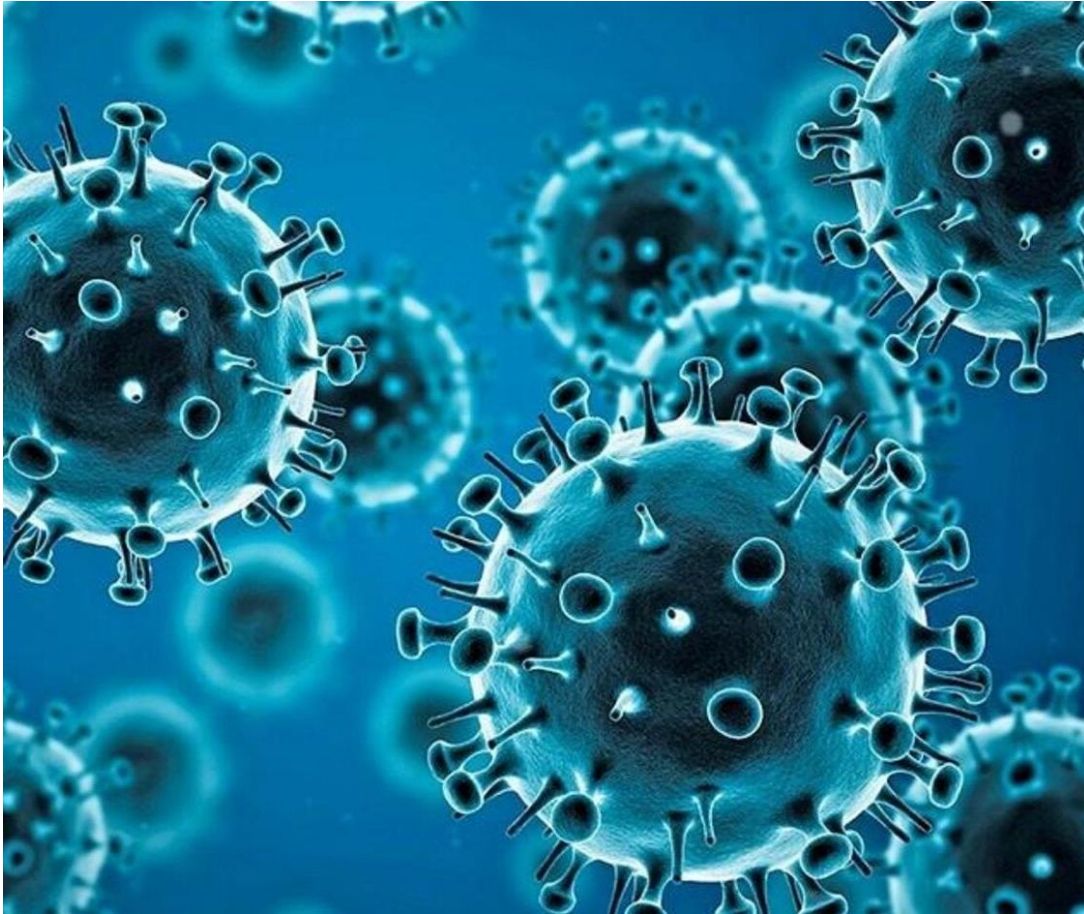
## Remember this?

The live BBC news incident where his kids crashed the newscast once seemed a little crazy??

Today, not so much....



# The Urgency Epidemic



- March 2020 – COVID 19 grounded our daily lives to a halt
- The **evolution** of the urgency epidemic began

Credit: The Hot Sauce Principle, Brandon Smith



# Technology has transformed our lives





Remember when ZOOM was a TV show....Now it's a technology platform that connects us to everyone, everywhere!



## Recessions leave battle scars

The global recession in 2008-2010 resulted in mass layoffs and the mantra of do more with less still permeates!





A woman with multiple arms is depicted in an office setting, illustrating multitasking. She has six arms in total. Her left arm holds a black telephone receiver, her right arm holds a red folder, her top-left arm holds a pen, and her top-right arm holds a pair of glasses. Her bottom-left arm is positioned near a laptop, and her bottom-right arm is near a keyboard. She is wearing a black sleeveless top and looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background is a plain white wall.

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Our attention  
span approaches  
ZERO

## Audience Poll –

What is your  
current level of  
URGENCY?

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Defcon 1

Defcon 3

Defcon 5



When everything is URGENT, we can't distinguish between what is IMPORTANT and what is not.

TIME MANAGEMENT MATRIX	
IMPORTANT	URGENT
	NOT URGENT
NOT IMPORTANT	<b>I</b> ACTIVITIES: Crises Pressing problems Deadline-driven projects
	<b>II</b> ACTIVITIES: Prevention, PC activities Relationship building Recognizing new opportunities Planning, recreation
NOT IMPORTANT	<b>III</b> ACTIVITIES: Interruptions, some calls Some mail, some reports Some meetings Proximate, pressing matters Popular activities
	<b>IV</b> ACTIVITIES: Trivia, busywork Some mail Some phone calls Time wasters Pleasant activities



A world consumed by urgency is an unsustainable one. Ultimately it will lead to burnout.



# Group Discussion



Q: In what way does your phone or other technology contribute to the urgency you experience.

Q: What industry pressures have you experienced that have increased the daily urgency you feel?

Q: Have you noticed your attention and ability to focus has changed in recent years? What role did urgency play in your feeling that way?

# The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly of Urgency

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When you feel urgency,  
what does that feel like?

What word or words  
would you use to  
describe that feeling?







# Many phrases associated with Urgency can have a negative connotation

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- Pressure
- Stress
- Anxiety
- Overwhelmed
- Burned Out
- High Energy
- Need to do something
- Focused
- Excitement



Why we need urgency?

Urgency helps us to survive.

It can be a motivator for  
growth and change.

Urgency is uncomfortable  
and sometimes it is just the  
thing we need.

# **URGENCY**

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**THE ABILITY TO FOCUS ON  
YOUR GOALS AND AVOID  
DISTRACTIONS**





# Group Discussion

Q: When has urgency been a motivator for you to grow or change in your life?

Q: How is urgency playing out in your life today? What aspects of your life where urgency is a **good** thing? What aspects of your life where urgency is a **bad** thing?

# Leading with Urgency

When you feel urgency, what do you do to cope?



## Start with Trust:

Urgency is about creating an intentional state of discomfort.



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# How do you create trust?

TRUST = (Authenticity + Vulnerability) x Credibility

Credit: The Hot Sauce Principle, Brandon Smith



# TRUST

Unlike authenticity and vulnerability, **credibility** takes time to build, and it can be lost in a moment.

What can we do to build trust in our organizations?



# Building Trust

- Communicate your expectations and values
- Practice what you preach
- Keep your word – always!
- Practice authenticity and vulnerability
- Be consistent





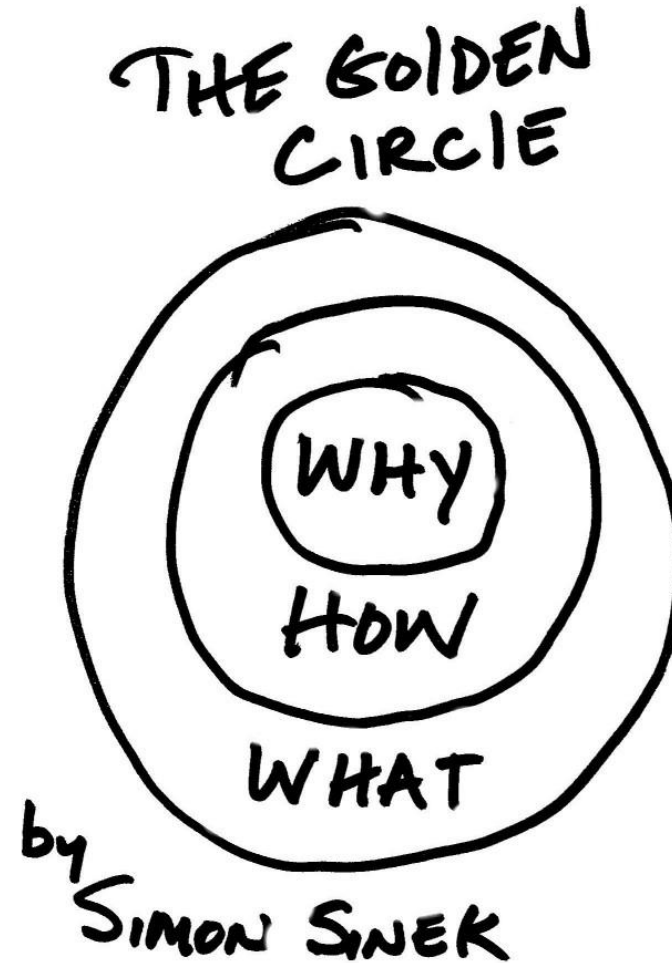
# Group Discussion

Q: Have you established trust with your team? How do you know?

Q: In reviewing the TRUST formula, what area do you think you need to address the most? Why?

Q: What is one action you could take to establish or strengthen **credibility** with your team?

What is your  
compelling  
“WHY”

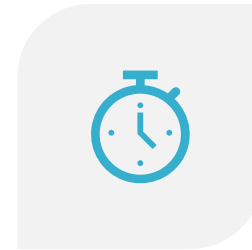


## 10% Urgency and 90% Action Plan

# Principles of Urgency



THE MESSENGER  
MATTERS



URGENCY MUST  
HAVE A TIMEFRAME  
IN WHICH TO ACT



RIGHT RATIO OF  
URGENCY



# Group Discussion

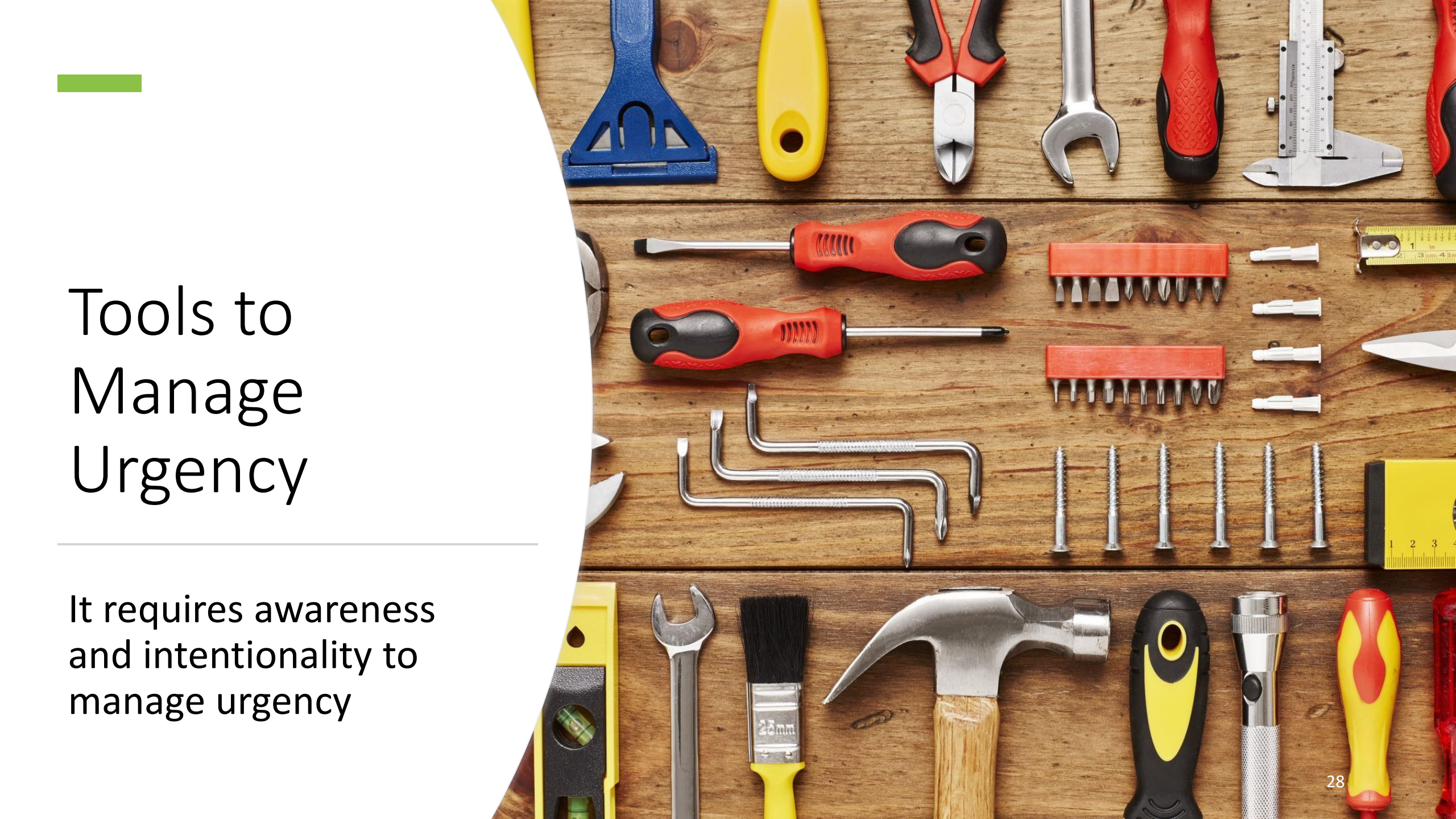
Q: Can you think of one urgent challenge in your organization today?

Q: Can you articulate your compelling “WHY” for change or growth? What is it?

Q: Do you have an action plan ready to discuss with your team to meet the above? Do you have a timeframe in which to act?



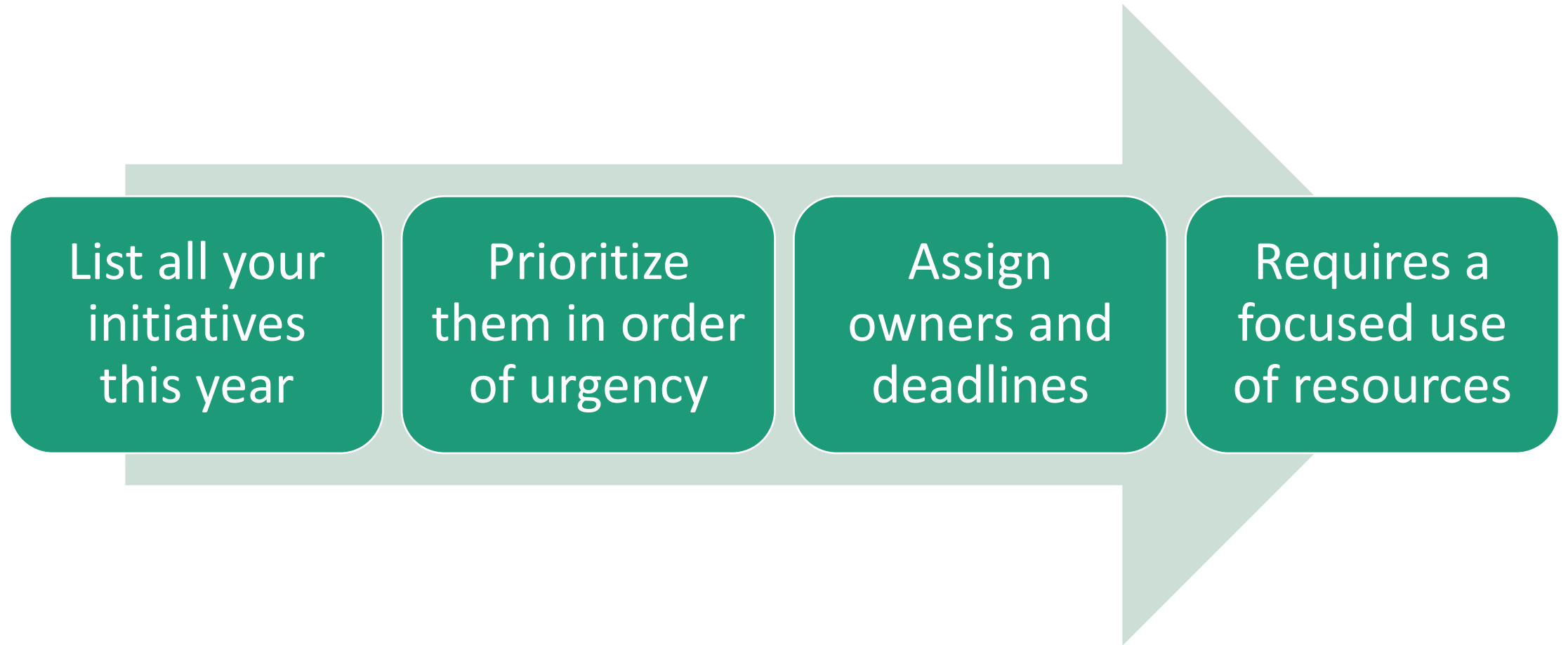




# Tools to Manage Urgency

It requires awareness  
and intentionality to  
manage urgency

# Prioritize Initiatives



# Group Discussion

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Q: Do you suffer from receiving too much “hot sauce” from those who lead above you? Are you guilty of putting urgency into everything or do you regularly prioritize?

Q: How can you manage this so that it does not negatively impact your team?

Q: Does everyone know your values and mission? How do you regularly communicate that?





# Protecting yourself from the heat

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# Don't let others control the Hot Sauce!

The goal is to use practical tools and scripts to communicate your needs and expectations professionally in order to protect yourself and your team.

Prioritization is key!

Have  
conversations  
with those  
bringing the  
heat

- It sounds like this is extremely urgent. I need your help. Here are other items on my plate that all seem urgent that I am already working on. From YOUR perspective, of all these initiatives, what should the priority be over the next week (quarter or month)?
- If it is up to me to prioritize, from my perspective, this is how I rank these initiatives. Unless you direct me otherwise, I am going to assume the order works for you, and I will proceed with this plan.



# Say “YES” by offering alternatives

- Often the right way to say “NO” is to say “YES but...”
- Provide an alternative solution to the problem, get into problem solving mode and find another person or resource to help with the task load.
- You are still acknowledging the urgency so that it does not increase but setting boundaries for you and your team on what you can deliver.



# Establish & Protect Boundaries

- You must first establish, then communicate and educate the other party on your boundaries.
- Set Do Not Disturb or Blackout periods on your calendar
- Be flexible when it's important but also learn to say “No”



**WORK-LIFE BALANCE**



- Outsource when possible – pay others to eat your hot peppers!
- Delegate – is there someone on the team with capacity?
- Sometimes you simply must walk away or say no.

# Group Discussion

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Q: Have you ever forced prioritization? How did that go?

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Q: Have you ever set boundaries by either saying “no” or setting blackout times on your schedule? Were your boundaries respected?

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Q: Have you ever seen a colleague effectively manage urgency from their manager? What did that look like?



# Resources and Credits

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[\*\*The Hot Sauce Principle, Brandon Smith\*\*](#)

[Start with WHY, Simon Sinek](#)

[Talks to Help you Manage Stress, Ted Talks](#)

[The Remarkable Leadership Podcast, Brandon Smith](#)

[How to set clear work boundaries – and stick to them!](#)





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# NASCSP 2022



## *Annual Training Conference*

"AGENTS OF CHANGE"

MINNEAPOLIS, MN

OCTOBER 24 - 28

Early Bird Registration & Hotel Room Block Close on September 23rd

# NASCSP Conference: Register [here!](#)

## Pre-conference: Monitoring

**Waste, Fraud, and Abuse**

**Monitoring: Purpose and Procedures**

**Fiscal Monitoring with Kevin Myren**

**Best practices and most common findings in Monitoring**

**Monitoring Updates for the BIL, WRF, and Competitive Grants**

**Monitoring Multifamily Buildings**

**Subgrantee Monitoring Analysis Overview and Peer Exchange**

**Getting all you can from the Desk Review**

## Core Conference

**Approaches to setting up statewide Multifamily WAP**

**DOE Federal Perspectives and Q&A session**

**Integrating Solar into Weatherization**

**Innovative Workforce Strategies and Pilots for the New Generation**

**Beneficial Electrification and the Future of the WAP**

**The 46<sup>th</sup> Weatherization Day Celebration**

# Thank you!

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